

On the Edge: Genealogies and Futures of Precarity

Abstract for annual graduate conference, Central European University in Budapest

Choreographies of Precariousness: A Genetic Study of the Performing Arts

Within my contribution I intend to present a methodology of the genetic study of performing arts through concentrating on the interdisciplinary approach of the FWO-funded research project "*Choreographies of Precariousness. A Transdisciplinary Study of the Working and Living Conditions in the Contemporary Dance Scenes of Brussels and Berlin*".

At the intersection of sociology of art, culture and labor, research has been conducted into the artistic career, but the field of contemporary dance remains understudied. A new wave of research within dance and dance studies focuses on creative processes rather than products. We do not know to what extent *precarity* is intertwined with motifs, values and tactics involved in artists' life and work. Collaboration between sociology and dance studies can bridge the two approaches and generates the growing field of Sociological Performance Studies. The notion that links both disciplines is the concept of *precarity*, since *precarity* can – next to the ontological insecurity (Butler) – stem from political, economic and social aspects of life (Lorey, Standing).

I argue that artists develop tactics (Certeau) within their genetic practice to deal with this *precarity* and to construct a more sustainable creativity. Similarly Estonian artist Maike Lond reported her efforts to look for a sponsor in *10 journeys to a place where nothing happens** (2013). Her aim was to cooperate with the private sector in order to gain financial independence from funding institutions. Her precarious search for money eventually turned into a performance. Within my investigation of comparable precarious genetics my arguments will be supported by 1) results from a survey conducted in Brussels (Spring 2015), in which respondents were questioned on the working conditions and values within the dance profession and 2) examples from the ongoing empirical study, including in-depth interviews and observations of working processes of selected respondents from the Brussels' contemporary dance scene.

100-word Biography

Annelies Van Assche received her Master's Degree in Performance Studies at the Ghent University (Belgium) in 2010. She has interned as a production assistant for Belgian collective Abattoir Fermé and German choreographic center K3 Tanzplan Hamburg. She has worked as a production and tour manager at P.A.R.T.S., the contemporary dance school of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker in Brussels, from 2011-2014. Then started her FWO-funded research on contemporary dancers' socio-economical position and its influence on creative processes, supervised by Katharina Pewny, Rudi Laermans and Christel Stalpaert (Ugent & KULeuven).

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